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Monday, April 13, 1953. Sunday, April 13, 1953.

THE agreement reached last week between the bus cooperatives and the Ministry of Transport is a favorable first step along the road to adequate regulation in the public interest of passenger transport by road.

REGULATING THE TRANSPORT interest of passenger transport by road. This concerns nearly every man, woman and child in the country. The transport cooperatives were permitted to develop unchecked into a monopoly, drawing profits, bonuses and disproportionate salaries by their own unilateral decision. Their main contact with the Government had been to seek permission from time to time to raise fares when costs began to eat into profits.

Nor, in the past, had any such increase in tariffs resulted in greater facilities for the travelling public. Overcrowding, irregular time tables, inadequate terminal stations and lack of shelters at stopping places, vehicles often in a dangerous state of disrepair mechanically, to say nothing of broken and splintered windows—all these were felt by the travelling public to be a poor return for ever increasing fares.

The bus cooperatives, for their part, have submitted that they were subjected to an almost intolerable strain in their work. They had vast crowds of travellers to deal with. One man had to drive the bus—in streets and roads which in many cases were quite inadequate to the volume of modern traffic. In addition, the fares and keep his temper in the face of continuous public grumbling and provocation.

The companies have also pleaded the vast increase in the price of spare parts, the prohibitive rise in the cost of new vehicles and the difficulties involved in keeping an aging and obsolescent fleet of buses in service. In a survey made last summer it was estimated that at the end of 1951 60 per cent of the buses were more than six years old and nearly 20 per cent more than 10 years old. Moreover, there were upwards of 25 different makes of buses which made the job of maintenance an ordeal. On top of all this, there was an overall deficiency of 500 vehicles.

The latest agreement seems to have fairly recognized the problems both of the public and of the companies. An increase of 18 per cent in fares has been granted by the Minister of Transport. But the concession differs fundamentally from permitted fare increases in the past; specific performance is demanded in certain fields and steps are being taken to see that the agreement is kept. Thus three per cent of the revenue resulting from the increased fares will be set aside in special accounts open to Government scrutiny. These monies will be used for renewing the fleet of buses, for maintenance, and building of new bus stations and shelters. There will be fixed time tables and inter-urban buses will have to provide proper seating facilities on express services and maintain regular schedules. The increase in fares will be cushioned by a system of season tickets which will allow reductions up to twenty per cent on a specified number of journeys. Moreover, Government and Local Authority appointees to sit on the committees charged with carrying out the proposals.

It will thus be seen that the new regulations are a promising beginning, but hardly more than that. A great deal that is unsatisfactory in the bus services has still to be tackled basically. There is no reason why the price of travel should not be considerably reduced by a complete rationalization of passenger transport. There is a pressing need for thorough survey of bus travel. One point that could be elicited, for example, is the load of traffic at different points along the same route. At present on almost all routes buses turn round only at final termini and start on peak periods with practically full loads. Within the routes themselves there should be shuttle services scientifically calculated according to the load.

In the final analysis some form of complete public control would be necessary if Israel is to have a really efficient bus service. The plan which seems most feasible in Israel is a Public Transport Board which will buy out the present co-operatives at a fair price and operate with increased funds at a fixed rate of profit. Israel geographically is sufficiently small a unit for such a single public transport board to undertake responsibility for all forms of transportation and the planned co-ordination of their inter-development.

INDIAN AND CZECH DEFECTION FROM VIENNA RALLY YOUTH CONFERENCE FIASCO

By G.F.R. GEDYE

VIENNA.—The biggest fiasco in the series of Communist "Front" conferences which the Red Army forces unwilling Vienna to harbor was certainly last month's "Conference in Defence of the Rights of Youth". For me it culminated in a telephone call from an Indian who introduced himself in almost unrecognizable English as a member of the Indian delegation who, revolted at Communist manipulation of the "Conference," had walked out on it. He asked me to visit him in the hotel in the French Sector in which he had taken refuge after fleeing from the Hotel Stadt Triest in the Russian Sector in which the Communist "Woodstock"—WFTU—World Federation of Trade Unions—was keeping the Indian and other delegations (free of charge) under close surveillance.

Shatrugan Prasad Singh is a dark, good-looking Hindu of 30. He is convinced that he has a mission to denounce the machinations of the Communist Party of India to trade unionists in the West, and to expose the swindles of this "Youth Conference". Singh is Secretary-General of the Bihar Institute of Cultural Relations, a pacifist internationalist body, an official of the Bihar T.U.C., and a founder-member of the India-China Friendship League. As a follower of Gandhi he spent two years in prison between 1942-1944. He showed me the official invitation of the "Youth Conference" and his delegate's card of admission. He confirmed that the whole costs of these fraudulent "conferences" are borne by the WFTU and other Soviet-run bodies.

Free Excursion Singh's organization declined to let him travel at Communist expense, but he could not avoid accepting the free hotel accommodation and meals provided here. The "Conference" is devoid of every scrap of political significance, he told me, "and is just a free excursion for a few fanatical youths from some 60 countries". Although the Communists wanted to use the labels of the bodies which Singh represents, they arranged to postpone recognition of his credentials until the report on "India" had been read by the chief Communist delegate, so as to prevent him from speaking. "It is a real disappointment after coming so far to find that having seen the scenery, nothing more can be done than to return immediately. Not a drop of tea, not a drop of water, not even some minutes shelter against the rain, are to be found at the terminal of Israel's most spectacular drive, the manager of the Potash camp, hailing from Glasgow, has broken most energetically with the time-honoured Israeli habit of "dropping into the mess" and even if he had, it would have been a somewhat sinister appearance to the workers' camp, the point of view of the management is understandable.

Rambler's Notebook every loaf of bread, every gallon of water has to be brought down at considerable expense. However, visitors do not expect the easy going hospitality of the kibbutz, but are under-standably surprised that this large camp has no canteen, source of great inconvenience to the workers themselves, who cannot get a packet of cigarettes or a bottle of beer at their not too enjoyable place of employment. For some basic considerations the licence for a canteen has to be reserved for a cooperative which, considering the varied composition of the workers, has only a poor chance of being constituted in the near future.

However that is a headache for the Potash management or its workers' council. To create a modest dining place for the tourists should be the concern of the Tourist Department. The disappointing experience of Eliat, where a monopoly was given to a cooperative whose "Rest House" has become a byword for untidiness depressing sloppiness, should be avoided. It is not too difficult to procure a pre-fabricated tent for Sdom and find a couple, willing to dispense drinks, cold food and cigarettes and to provide a shower for those who want to try a swim in the Dead Sea. If they manage to make their place gay and friendly, the patronage of the workers, who will be all too grateful to escape the dreariness of the camp would guarantee their success.

When Mr. Harry Levy, founder of the unfortunate "Kallit Hotel" at the northern end of the Dead Sea, provided the buffet at the opening ceremony of the new road he had his waiters dressed in the old "Kallit" uniform. We are reasonably sure that Mr. Levy (even if the time for a new "Kallit" at Sdom, or preferably at Ein Gedi, has not yet come) would willingly give his experienced advice for the installation of a Tourist Department Rest House. TA.F.M.

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NATURE NOTES April Birds

THIS is a good time for reviewing the summer-birds among the birds, for with the exception of the spotted flycatcher they should by now all be here, an addition of about 25 species to our resident nesters. In the crochets of large trees we may find the nests of woodpeckers and of masked shrikes. These latter beautiful grey, black and white birds, with strong curved bills, nested in my vicinity for five years but then left. They are still common in the Sharon.

The Rufous warbler — brown and rust-colored, with upright stances and upright tail, builds in thorny thickets, often twining a snake's sloughed skin found on terraces and the like.

Among the larger birds the most easily watched are the eastern turtle dove, the beautiful shimmering blue western roller, the hoopoe with his nest stripes and jaunty crest, very tame, and Israel's most colorful bird, the bee-eater, usually seen in little flocks of a dozen or so, wheeling and whistling, and flashing in almost all colours of the rainbow.

On the islands near the shore the little terns have arrived, the little bittern — smallest of the heron tribe — can be surprised in its odd upright posture, appearing at the sky, and of birds of prey the Egyptian vulture and the short-toed eagle soar in the blue above the cliffs of Carmel and of the Galilee mountains. P.A.

Budapest Meeting Almost concurrently with this Conference that of the Disarmament of Hungarian Communist Youth was meeting in Budapest. Its resolutions, published in Nepszava of March 22 made no mention of such youth "rights" as sport and recreation. They demanded intensified output by young miners and steelworkers, the strengthening of youth employment in the machine industry "in accordance with Soviet methods, to accelerate fulfilment of the export plan." For the iron works in Stalina, Komlo and Dika, we must deal with those who failed to complete 100 per cent of their "norms". Resolution 6 called for "a tightening of work discipline" and No. 8 for "the organization of Stachanovism among young workers."

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